GB 5423 Historical Theology I
Fall 2015
Dr. John Mark Hicks

Course Description

A survey of Christian thought from 100 CE to 1600 CE. The thought of influential leaders and significant themes are examined in their historical context in the light of their significance for the contemporary church.

1. To engage in theological discussion in the context of historical thought.
2. To investigate and discover the theological method and significant themes of historical persons.
3. To understand and explain the significance of historical theology for the contemporary church.
4. To think both theologically and historically about major themes in the Christian tradition.
5. To subject our own theological method and views to the critique of previous theologians.
6. To explain the dynamic of theological development in the history of Christian thought.

Course Textbooks


Course Requirements

1. Class Participation. 20% of your course grade.

In addition to participation in the classroom, the class participates through the use of Blackboard that is accessible through MyLipscomb at [http://my.lipscomb.edu/cp/home/loginf](http://my.lipscomb.edu/cp/home/loginf). Every student is required to
submit at least one 200-word post every week. This must be submitted before Friday 5:00 pm of each week.

2. Historical-Theological Papers (50% of your grade)

You are required to write two papers. Each paper should be between 2200-2500 words.

Choose at least one Christian author from A.D. 100-1000 and one Christian author from A.D. 1000-1600. You are not limited to the authors we study in this course. You may select other writers or theologians that interest you. However, check with the instructor for permission and assistance.

Your paper should be a reflection on a particular theological theme within a particular writing by a specific writer (e.g., the concept of merit in the *Summa* of Thomas Aquinas, or predestination in Zwingli’s *Providence of God*, or the role of the “Jesus Prayer” in the spirituality of Gregory of Palamas in his *Philokalia*). Reading the primary source material is absolutely essential.

In addition, you must utilize at least *five* secondary sources (a mix of monographs and peer-reviewed journal articles) that are specific interpretations of this topic in relation to the author you are reading.

The paper should (1) identify the significance of the topic in historical theology; (2) describe the author’s view; and (3) comment on the contemporary significance of the topic for theology and/or church practice.

The first paper is due on **October 16 at 11:59 pm (CST)** and the second on **November 27 at 11:59 pm (CST)**. All late papers are automatically reduced by one letter grade per week for each week late.

3. One Comprehensive Exam (30% of grade)

There is one comprehensive exam in the last week of the course. The final exam will ask you to integrate the material of the course in a comprehensive manner.
Contact Information

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Course Notifications

Academic Integrity Policy

This is a course designed to integrate one's experience of the Gospel of Jesus Christ in such a way that, by word and deed, the gospel is proclaimed to others. For that reason, academic integrity and excellence in effort is expected of every student. As your instructor, I will deal with each student fairly and honestly. As students, you are expected to do your own work on tests and oral presentations unless I indicate that collaboration is allowed on a specific assignment. Penalties for integrity violations will range from failure on the assignment involved to failure in the course. As your instructor, I reserve the right to report violations to members of the administration. For clarification, refer to the university's Code of Conduct and the Academic Integrity Policy.

Students Requiring Accommodations

If you require accommodations for a documented disability, please discuss your circumstances with me immediately. If you are entitled to accommodations but have not yet registered with the Counseling Center, please contact that office immediately (phone # 615-279-1781).

Dropping the Course

A student's decision to stop attending class does NOT constitute dropping the course. A drop/add form (available in the Registrar's office) must be signed by the teacher and processed in the Registrar's office before the drop is official. NOTE: If your name appears on the roster at grading time and you have not officially dropped the course, you will be assigned a grade based on the policies outlined in this syllabus.

Course Schedule

Aug 27  Introduction to Historical Theology

Olson, pp. 13-24 (Introduction)
Hicks, “Why Care about Church History or Historical Theology,”

Sep 3 Three Early Syrian Voices: Ignatius, the Didache and the Gospel of Thomas

Olson, pp. 25-53 (Chapters 1-2).
Didache (Blackboard Readings)
Gospel of Thomas (Blackboard Readings)
Ignatius, Letters (Blackboard Readings)

Sep 10 Alexandrian Theology (Early Platonic Theology)

Olson, pp. 54-67, 99-112 (Chapters 3, 6)
Justin Martyr's First Apology (Blackboard Readings)
Origen, On First Principles, Preface and Book II (Blackboard Readings)

Sep 17 North African Theology (Early Latin Theology)

Olson, pp. 84-98, 113-136 (Chapters 5, 7, 8).
Tertullian
  a. On Baptism (Blackboard Readings)
b. On Repentance (Blackboard Readings)
Cyprian, On the Unity of the Catholic Church (Blackboard Readings)

Sep 24 Asiatic Theology (Early Greek Theology)

Olson, 68-78 (Chapter 4).
Gnostic Texts:
  a. The Gospel of Truth (Blackboard Readings)
b. The Gospel of Philip (Blackboard Readings)
Irenaeus, Against Heresies.
  c. Book I, Preface (Blackboard Readings)
d. Book III, Preface (Blackboard Readings)
e. Book III, Chapters 1-5 (Blackboard Readings)
Irenaeus, The Apostolic Preaching of the Gospel (Blackboard Readings)

Oct 1 Trinitarian Controversy

Olson, pp. 137-196 (Chapters 9-12).
(Blackboard Readings)

Oct 8 Christological Controversy

Olson, pp. 197-250 (Chapters 13-16).
Oct 15  Theological Anthropology

Olson, pp. 251-289 (Chapters 17-18).
(Blackboard Readings)

Oct 22  Monastic Theology

Desert Mothers and Fathers, *Apopthegmata Patrum* (Blackboard Readings)
Macrina the Younger, *Life of Macrina* by Gregory of Nyssa (Blackboard Readings)
“Rule of St. Benedict” (Blackboard Readings)
St. Bernard, “On Loving God” (Blackboard Readings)

Oct 29  Eastern Spirituality

Olson, pp. 279-310 (Chapters 19-20).
Gregory of Nyssa, *On Perfection* (Blackboard Readings)
Dionysius the Areopagite, *Mystical Theology* (Blackboard Readings)
John of Damascus, *On Holy Images* (Blackboard Readings)
Gregory of Palamas, *On Unceasing Prayer* (Blackboard Readings)

Nov 5  Scholastic Theology

Olson, pp. 311-347 (Chapters 21-22).
Anselm, *Why God Became Man*, Book I. (Blackboard Readings)
Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* (Blackboard Readings)

Nov 12  Vernacular Theology

Olson, pp. 348-368 (Chapter 23).
Julian of Norwich, *Revelations of Love* (Blackboard Readings)
Jan Hus, *On the Church* (Blackboard Readings)

Nov 19  Lutheran Theology

Olson, pp. 369-396 (Chapter 24).
Martin Luther
  "95 Theses" (1517) (Blackboard Readings)
  “Sermon on Threefold Righteousness” (1518) (Blackboard Readings)
  "Baptism," *Large Catechism* (Blackboard Readings)
  “Sacrament of the Altar,” *Large Catechism* (Blackboard Readings)
  Augsburg Confession (1530; articles 2, 4, 6, 9, 10, 18, 20) (Blackboard Readings)
Nov 26  NO CLASS – THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY

Dec 3  Reformed Theology (Zwingli and Calvin)

Olson, pp. 397-413 (Chapter 25).
Ulrich Zwingli
   “A Short Exposition of the Faith” (1531) (Blackboard Readings)
   “Sixty-Seven Articles” (1523) (Blackboard Readings)
Jean Calvin
   “Institute of the Christian Religion” (1559), Book II, 17; Book III, 24; Book IV, 17.
   (Blackboard Readings)
   “Geneva Confession” (1559) (Blackboard Readings)

Dec 10  Anabaptist Theology

Olson, pp. 414-428 (Chapter 26).
Schleitheim Confession (Blackboard Readings)
Menno Simon
   “A Fundamental and Clear Confession of the Poor and Distressed Christians”
   (Blackboard Readings)
   Dordrecht Confession (1632) (Blackboard Readings)